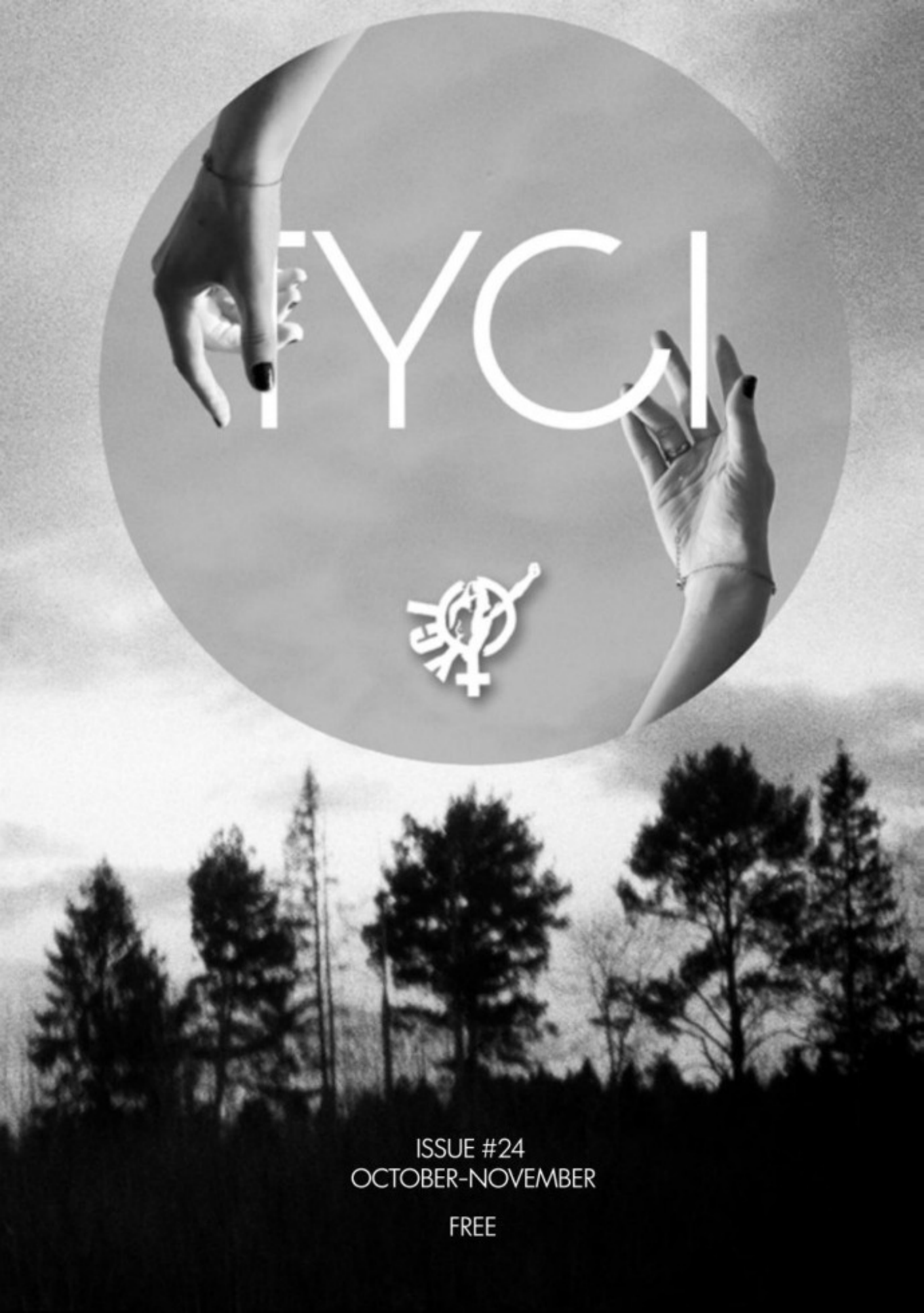
FYCI



ISSUE #24
OCTOBER-NOVEMBER

FREE

THANK YOU

FOR PICKING UP TYCI'S SPECIAL MENTAL HEALTH RELATED ZINE.

To coincide with this year's Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival, we wanted to talk about mental health and how it impacts our lives.

TYCI is honoured to be working with the festival in support of their goals: raising awareness of mental health issues and reducing the stigma surrounding them.

Inside this zine, TYCI contributors share their own experiences of depression, anxiety and other mental illnesses, talking about how they cope and what we can do to challenge pre-conceived notions about the topics. We also interviewed charities and organisations who work with those suffering from mental health problems, offering support to those people, their families and friends.

Our 18 October event in Bloc will be a celebration of the connection between mental health and creativity, with London post-punk duo DEUX FURIEUSES playing live alongside Glasgow DJ extraordinaire FLORE DE HOOG. Our October raffle will raise money for Shakti Women's Aid, an organisation offering help to black / minority ethnic women and children dealing with domestic abuse.

SCOTTISH MENTAL HEALTH ARTS & FILM FESTIVAL

For more on this year's festival and the organisations involved, visit mhfestival.com.

ANXIETY PART 1:

OR, 5 RIDICULOUS THINGS PEOPLE WITH ANXIETY BELIEVE

Rosie Davies writes a regular column for TYCI called Good Mental, talking about all things, well, life. In this instalment, she talks anxiety.

I once had to do a talk in front of some students, and I was really nervous about it. To clarify, when I say really nervous, I mean that I became the world's biggest arsehole.

Nothing whatsoever could turn my mind away from worrying about this vile event. For three weeks beforehand, I could not stop thinking or talking about it, to the extent that I should have sent a group text apologising to everyone I'd encountered socially. I would bet money on the fact that if someone had called to say that my mother had been hit by a bus, I would have thought "well yes, but what about my talk?"

The day before, I spoke in a strange, clipped manner as if playing a game where you had to get as many words out as quickly as possible. I fantasised about punching perfect strangers in the back of the head whilst shouting, "I hate you so much" - admittedly, more of a daily experience, but The Day Before, I wanted to keep punching until they wept, "you're right, I am disgusting and cannot walk at an acceptable pace, I deserve each and every punch to my stupid misshapen head," and the force of my fantasy terrified me.

On The Actual Godforsaken Day, I woke up and realised with alarm that I had forgotten how to breathe - something you always take for granted until it happens. Arriving at the college, legs trembling, I tried to tell the woman at reception my name but the words got stuck in my throat and when I said my name again it came out abnormally loud and deep, as if I had changed gender. I got in the lift and felt like my throat was closing up and I couldn't get enough breathe into my lungs and one thought flashed in my mind: you need to tell someone that you're about to die. The trembling in my legs had started again and for some

unknown reason I kept stroking my own neck with both hands in a creepy manner, as if sizing myself up for a seductive throttling.

But the absolute worst, worst part of it all was that when we got out of the lift and were walking down the corridor towards the room, I was suddenly struck by the horrible certainty that I had soiled myself. Not the more acceptable fluid version, but the proper, other-way-round fecal one.

This is when everything started to seem a bit blurry aside from the sensation of damp spreading across my backside like a slow sadistic smile: I had shat myself! I no longer had control of my bowels! And I was going to have to deal with this horrendous fact whilst giving an hour-long talk in essentially a full nappy and ohgodohgodohgod it was going to start to smell. This horrible dirty secret could be detected by at least two of the senses.

When we got into the room (big projector screen, cables, seating bank, panicpanicpanicPANIC) I somehow, somehow, managed to ask where the toilet was without bursting into tears or stopping breathing altogether and jittered off with my bag covering my arse.

...the bag, as I found out when I got to the toilet, that contained the leaky half-flask of coffee that I hadn't closed properly, and which had leaked through the bag's lining to coat my lower cheeks with its warm and, unfortunately, poo-brown contents. I really don't think I need to explain the relief I felt on finding out that my bowels had not emptied of their own accord but, unfortunately, this is the kind of relief that you can only experience in hindsight, and I can't remember much from the next few hours other than that they passed.

As much as you're probably thinking, "no, it's fucking well not", this is a normal reaction to have when faced with a stressful experience (aside from toilet issue, granted). The physical and mental feelings and were the result of my body going into fight-or-flight mode, firing out adrenaline like hormones at a One Direction concert.

The problem was, for a year or so I'd been feeling like this for no reason whatsoever. Walking to the corner shop, meeting a friend for coffee, walking down the street: at any point I could be suddenly gripped by it. I'm talking Anxiety, with a capital A, and if you have ever been through this then let me tell you, if you'll mind the pun, that it is truly, truly crap.

SUPPORT IN MIND

Frances Simpson, chief executive of the charity, talks us through their work.

For TYCI readers who don't know about Support In Mind Scotland, what sets you apart from other organisations that are currently available?

Support in Mind Scotland has specific expertise in serious mental health problems and specifically schizophrenia and psychosis. Stigma and discrimination around mental ill-health still persists, but although campaigns such as See Me have made a considerable difference in tackling stigma around more common mental health problems such as depression, for the 1 in 100 people living with schizophrenia, there are still persistent and damaging misconceptions about people with schizophrenia being violent or dangerous - and this is just not true for the vast majority of people with the condition.

Why was mental health work something you wanted to get involved in?

Because people with mental health problems face huge discrimination in all aspects of their lives. Many are unemployed because employers make assumptions about what they will be able to do and that brings low income, benefits - poverty. People have to cope with debilitating conditions that mean that doing ordinary every day things are much more difficult - and that can be misunderstood and people can be judged as being lazy or just not caring about themselves.

What services does Support In Mind Scotland provide?

We provide support and practical help to people experiencing mental health problems and mental illness and their families, friends and supporters. We have around 20 services across Scotland providing one to one support in our resource centres and out in the community. We run groups that provide vocational/ rehabilitation opportunities; we run art, craft and music groups to help people express themselves, learn new skills and form social contacts to address isolation and develop social skills.

We provide opportunities and encouragement to look after physical health and wellbeing. We help people with benefits and housing and getting into training or employment. We support families and carers with emotional support as well as thinking about their own development needs; and we help

...CONT.

people to understand their rights through information and publications.

TYCI has a large female audience, could you give us any information on issues which you have found affect this demographic more?

We do run some women only groups to allow our female members to talk about things that might be difficult to discuss with men - we know that a main factor in experiencing mental ill health is childhood and other trauma - and for women this can be due to abuse; so having a safe space to talk is important.

We also recognise that a large number of carers are female - certainly not exclusively, but a majority of our carer members are women. We know that women can bear the greater responsibility for caring within families, and we have a number of older women for example who are now single mothers for adult sons with schizophrenia. Some people we support through our short breaks service are in their 70s and 80s and still supporting sons in their 50s and 60s so this is a lifelong responsibility for some.

The recent work we did was around people in custody who are in mental distress and we found that this impacted one women in very distinct and difficult ways. Women experience more trauma as the result of abuse; and we also heard from women who spoke about the impact on children and on relationships.

What are the biggest misconceptions about mental health?

Firstly, that people with schizophrenia are violent and dangerous. This is not true. Only 2% of murders are committed by people who have a mental illness at the time of the crime.

Secondly, that a mental health problem means that someone cant or wont be able to work or be an active or valuable citizen. People can and do recover from mental ill health and it is also possible to live full and active lives with the right support. Therefore we must all work hard not to make assumptions about someone - and if you know someone who is having a hard time, then be there for them with lots of understanding and positive messages. A friend once said to me that she recovered from serious mental illness because those around her 'held the hope' for her during times when she couldn't do it for herself.

Finally, mental ill-health doesn't just 'happen' to other people. Mental health is something we all have and we all have good days and not so good days. Being aware of our own mental health and asking for help when we need it and recognising when someone close to us is struggling is crucial for preventing long-term problems.

support in mind scotland
action for people affected by mental illness

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT SUPPORTINMINDSCOTLAND.ORG.UK.

penumbra
your way to a brighter future

Development Officer Jane Cumming tells us about the Edinburgh organisation.

Tell us about Penumbra.

We provide a wide range of services for adults and young people which offer hope and practical steps towards recovery. Our vision is of a society where every individual is accepted, supported and has the resources to fulfil their potential, without limits caused by mental ill health.

What services does Penumbra provide?

Penumbra supports people to live fulfilling and contributing lives. We do this by following our person centred model of HOPE. For us, hope is a vital part of recovery, and supporting people to have, and hold hope for the future, is a key part of our work. However, HOPE also stands for Home, Opportunity, People, Empowerment. We use a range of tools and resources in our work, and we aim to support people in one on one and in group settings through our wellbeing workshops.

As TYCI has a large female audience, could you give us any information on issues which you have found affect this demographic more?

Anxiety and depression are the most common mental health problems affecting people in Scotland and the UK. Whilst in no way exclusive to women, it is known that factors such as domestic and sexual abuse can contribute to mental health problems and this is something that unfortunately does affect many women in our communities. Another area that affects the health and wellbeing of women, again not exclusively, is caring. The caring role that predominantly falls to women is also known to contribute to mental health problems with 75% of carers reporting that their own health is made worse by their caring role.

What would you say are the biggest misconceptions about mental health and what can we all do to help challenge these?

One in four Scots will experience mental ill health at some point in their lives, ranging from anxiety and depression to personality disorders and schizophrenia. Almost half of people who experience a mental health problem don't want anyone else to know. It is important that we work together to raise awareness of mental health problems: to promote positive health and wellbeing; prevent mental ill health; and to support people who are experiencing mental health problems towards recovery.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT PENUMBRA.ORG.UK.

www.tyci.org.uk

ladyCHAT

LADYCHAT IS A FEATURE THAT RUNS ON THE TYCI SOCIAL NETWORKS. WE GIVE YOU YOUR DAILY DOSE OF GRRRRL BY SHARING INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES BY OR ABOUT WOMEN. CHECK THEM OUT ON OUR TWITTER AND INSTRAGRAM (@ TYCIBLOG), OR VISIT FACEBOOK.COM/ TYCIBLOG.

YOU LEARN THAT THE ONLY WAY TO GET ROCK-STAR POWER AS A GIRL IS TO BE A GROUPIE AND BARE YOUR BREASTS AND GET CHOSEN FOR THE NIGHT. WE LEARN THAT THE ONLY WAY TO GET ANYWHERE IS THROUGH MEN. AND IT'S A LIE.

Kathleen Hanna

www.tyci.org.uk

Action on Depression

CEO Alex Stobart talks about the goals and achievements of the organisation.

What is Action On Depression?

Action on Depression is a charity there to serve the Scottish people who are looking for help.

How would you define 'depression'?

Severe, typically prolonged, feelings of despondency, isolation and dejection

What services does Action on Depression provide?

We support and inform people about depression. Action On Depression meets with, talks to and supports thousands of people every year. 8 million people a year book appointments at the GP that include mental health as an issue. We would like people to feel comfortable talking with someone before it reaches this point. We act to influence decision makers to encourage good mental health, and create emotional conditions in Scotland that enable people to share feelings and seek help.

What would you say are the biggest misconceptions about mental health and what can we all do to help challenge these?

5.3 million Scots have a head and a heart - this will influence us, as will external factors. If we all wish to live fulfilling lives, then being inclusive, kind and "do as you would be done by" can help.

And how can we help support the work of Action on Depression?

By encouraging people to share their feelings. By asking that more resources are moved from medical models to communities, families and individuals to self manage and work together.

What are Action on Depression's plans for the rest of 2014 and beyond?

Keep surviving and thriving in these challenging times, and show citizens, communities and funders the value of our work. Going forward, to design and deliver more person centred services in communities with citizens and other organisations. Good health is helped by feeling in control, having relationships and balance.

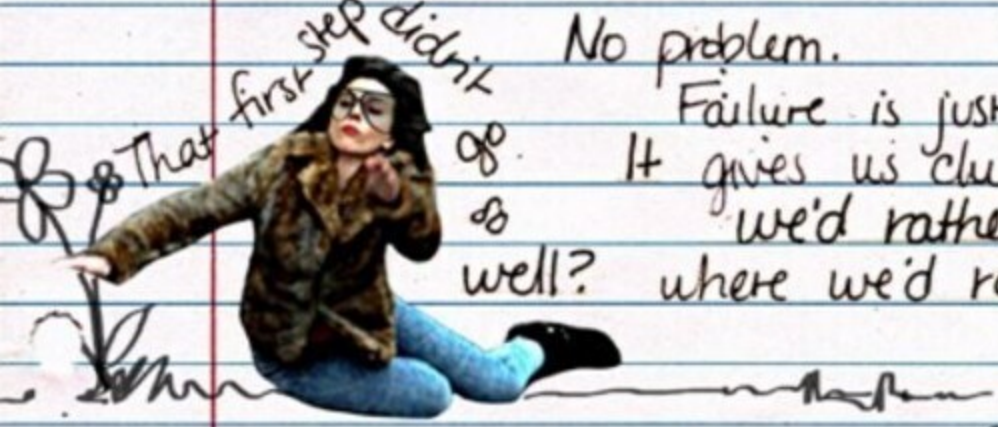
FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT ACTIONONDEPRESSION.ORG.

To Do:

- Write out your thoughts. Journal them.

"If you don't understand yourself you don't understand anybody else."
- Nikki Giovanni

- Take any step - nomatter how small. Just start somewhere. (Small steps add up!)



No problem. Failure is just information. It gives us clues to what we'd rather have and where we'd rather be. Keep going.

"Action is the antidote to despair." -Joan Baez

- Treat yourself. Think of something you'd like someone else to do for you and gift that to yourself. Focus on enjoying your own company and how it feels good to give yourself something that you are seeking from someone else. Could be: a movie, some nice self-talk, a vacation, love!

What are you missing that you don't have to wait for someone else to provide?

"Life is what we make it, always has been, always will be."
- Grandma Moses

• Keep a success journal. Every day list 3 things that you did from the day that can be viewed as a success.

Don't worry - it doesn't have to be anything major. It could be:

Today I did the dishes.
I went for a 15 min. walk
I emailed Joey and asked him out for coffee even though I was nervous.

Keeping a success journal helps you get into the habit of recognizing when you've done something that can be viewed positively.

It encourages you to take a moment and acknowledge yourself in a positive way. These little moments start building a foundation for a better self-view and self talk.

*Quotes used are part of our #LADYCHAT series at TYCI.org.uk

TO CATCH A THIEF

Kat Lombard-Cook writes about depression and memory.

Depression steals so much from you. It steals your confidence, your appetite, your enjoyment of things you once loved, your relationships, your concentration. For some of us, it may also steal our memories.

A few years ago, I read about a study about over-generalised memory. Participants in the study were asked to recall specific memories in relation to cue words. Some could not pinpoint a singular instance from their past for the cues. The researchers found a correlation between this inability to draw upon concrete memories of the past and depression.

When things are good, this form of remembering doesn't really impact the person. When times are bad, however, people can't hold onto a memory of when things were better. Without that reference, they can't project an idea of themselves being well again in the future, which makes it even more difficult to recover form an episode of major depression.

This research really struck a chord with me. Not only have I suffered from depression and anxiety for as long as I can remember—I first saw a therapist when I was seven—I also have found myself struggling to grasp long term memories that everyone I know found readily.

They're things you ask as ice-breakers or answer as part of online surveys: what was the first record/tape/cd you bought; who/where was your first kiss; who was your favourite teacher at school; what was the first concert you went to; what was your favourite book as a kid? These are questions about supposedly formative experiences in your life, and I can't answer a single one. It's really frustrating to be the person

who is constantly drawing a blank.

I read about this study just as I was embarking on my PhD in Design and decided to use my practice as a way to fight back. By their very nature, memories are fragmentary and require our conscious mind to shape them into a constructive narrative. As I am interested in studying the boundaries of narrative, I thought I could use my own childhood memories as a liminal space to explore the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves. How much could I remember about my own past? Could I remember more if I worked at it? Would my memory of certain events remain static over time? If I gave someone else the same memory fragments I had access to, would they form the same narrative with them as I do, or does our worldview shade how we assemble our stories?

When I tried to reach back into my childhood, specific moments did not come readily to mind. I could remember what other people had told me about my childhood, but I could not remember these instances as they happened to me. I found myself having to try to separate my own memories from the stories I have heard over and over again and incorporated into my life story. Other people weren't the only ones who perpetuated these stories that felt like memories. I began to question narratives I had constructed around events whose certainty had dulled over time, where story stood in place of memory.

One thing I remember very well is the house I grew up in. I remember its layout, the furniture, the textures of the upholstery, the toile of the wallpaper, the finish of the sink, the horrible teal paint I convinced my mom to let me use in the attic. So I started there, trying to rebuild the place I called home. I then tried to pinpoint specific memories to each space of the house. I was particularly interested to see if I could remember my emotional attachment to the spaces.

One of the things that struck me is how most of my memories are emotionally flat. I would expect moments of pain or joy to jump out, to have stuck with me. Instead, I remember the yellow and the fading flowers of the couch I sat on when my parents told me they were getting a divorce. I have no idea how I felt… This inability to connect memories with emotions reminds me of the description of over-generalised memory in the study. I can't remember the good times, but by the same token, my brain has protected me from the bad as well.

This is all very much still a work in progress, so perhaps one day I will unlock the feelings buried under so much time. At least I now feel as if I am doing something active to reclaim my past from myself, and maybe even working towards laying down foundation where I can have a healthier relationship to my memories going forward.

FOR MORE OF KAT'S WORK, VISIT KATLOMBARDCOOK.COM.

YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND IN DEPRESSION

A feature on mental health by Gretchen King.

So, you're feeling down. Life's challenges have left you baffled and bruised? Take a moment to remember those reassuring words of Carole King: You've Got A Friend… One who sticks by your side, especially at the worst of times. One who gives you advice, even when you don't ask for it.

She Is Depression.

Just as some friends can lack tact at giving advice in difficult situations, so does Depression. She may say all the wrong things, but her intentions are much more kind than the harsh delivery of her words. And although Depression's timing feels inconvenient, I actually believe her to have excellent timing... Because as soon as she enters the room, it's our cue to stop and listen. It's time for a change.

Depression is like a toddler who can only communicate their needs through a limited vocabulary. If you've spent any time with a baby, you'll know that often the only way they communicate is through a barrage of tears. When we cannot understand their needs, they will become even more frustrated and cry louder.

Depression hasn't learned the right words to express herself. You can teach her, but first you need to understand how she communicates. When Depression begins to deliver statements like: "Nobody loves me" or "I wish they weren't so demanding of me" or "Why doesn't he / she show me more affection? Am I not worth it?", look at what Depression is genuinely trying to tell you.

"Nobody loves me" is telling us "I need to work on loving myself."

"I wish they weren't so demanding of me" turns into "I need to establish my boundaries. Here are the things I am ok with, and here are some things that I will not do for them."

"Why doesn't he / she

show me more affection? Am I not worth it?" becomes "How does he show me that he cares in his own way? How can I explain to him the ways that make me feel loved. How can I learn to value myself even when feeling rejected?"

With a little patience and a new method of understanding, you can teach her a better way of communicating. You can turn depressive thoughts into healthy requests that will positively change yourself forever.

THIS IS AN EXCERPT. TO READ THE FULL ARTICLE, VISIT TYCI.ORG.UK. FOR MORE OF GRETCHEN'S WORK, HEAD TO GRETCHENKING.COM.

Isabel McCue set up Theatre Nemo after losing her son following an eight year battle with mental ill-health. Here, she tells us about the charity.

What is Theatre Nemo?

Theatre Nemo is a charity using creativity in supporting and empowering people within the community, psychiatric hospitals and prisons. Engaging people who have social and mental health issues, along with their family and friends to have better more productive lives, by gaining confidence and self-belief.

Our aims are:
- To raise the confidence, self esteem and motivation of the participants.
- To offer a safe environment to learn, create, express and enjoy
- To support recovery and offer an increased and lasting quality of life
- To help reduce self harm
- To offer a sense of belonging to something good and positive.

What kind of projects does Theatre Nemo create? What is the aim behind each of these?

Participants take part in a self-motivating journey using the art mediums of drama, animation, visual art and music to develop their confidence and skills. Giving people the opportunity to get their voices heard is very powerful in promoting confidence and reducing stigma. These workshops allow the participants to experience the feeling of achievement, of trusting others to keep them safe and of others putting their trust in them by using drama exercises that are designed to promote trust and teamwork and our responsibility to one another.

How have you found that creativity helps facilitate discussions about mental health?

As an organisation we aim to give people a voice through the medium of the arts, this is the voice that the individual wishes to use. This can vary from person to person, an interesting element of the work we do encourages people to believe in themselves and this is shown by increased confidence to participate with others to create something positive that they can be proud of.

If anyone is concerned about their own mental health or that of someone they know, what advice would you give them? Speak to a trusted friend once you bring a problem out into the open it instantly becomes smaller people will be supportive. Go to your doctor. Don't give up if you don't get the right support straight away. Question all the alternatives as one size doesn't fit all.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT THEATRENEMO.ORG.

Ladysounds

LADYSOUNDS

IS A FEATURE ON THE TYCI SOCIAL NETWORKS. EVERY MONDAY, WE POST A PICTURE PERTAINING TO A THEME AND ASK YOU TO SEND US SUGGESTIONS OF SONGS BY FEMALE BANDS AND MUSICIANS TO GO IN A PLAYLIST TO DO WITH THAT TOPIC. EVERY SUNDAY, WE SHARE 15 OF THE BEST TUNES ON 8TRACKS.

SEND YOUR TRACK SUGGESTIONS TO CONTACT.TYCI@GMAIL.COM OR HIT US UP ON FACEBOOK.COM/TYCIBLOG, TWITTER AND INSTAGRAM (@ TYCIBLOG).

not just the monthly blues

Cathryn Hanley writes about Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder and its unexpected impact.

Cramps, bloating, cravings, fatigue, mood swings. Women of menstruating age are well acquainted with the contents of mother nature's monthly "gift"; we prep ourselves for the emotional ups and downs, and perhaps we pick up a bag of sweets to have on-hand to satisfy cravings. It's an inconvenient storm that passes through once a month, but rarely one we cancel plans for.

For some women, the premenstrual symptoms that arise have the impact of a hurricane. Cramps are crippling, fatigue is bed-confining, and mood swings are a roller-coaster ride of euphoria, severe depression, and sometimes suicidal thoughts. These women's lives come to a halt anywhere from 5-11 days before their period and find that symptoms disappear at the start of menstruation.

This severe form of PMS is known to many in the medical community as Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder, or PMDD.

"I felt like a completely different person in the week leading up to my period," a friend told me of her journey toward being diagnosed with PMDD. For privacy purposes, her name has been changed to Emma. "I can't simply say

that I was 'moody'. There were times when I was so distraught that I felt like I was going crazy and other times I would be so apathetic, and so numb, that I wondered if I was still living. My emotional symptoms became predominant. I couldn't stop crying, I couldn't control how dark my thoughts were, and I often could not motivate myself to go through the motions of daily life."

Emma's gynecologist prescribed her the birth control pill after she struggled with irregular periods and painful cramps. The pill alleviated these for about seven months, after which it stopped working completely and her symptoms came back with a vengeance. After being prescribed a different pill to no avail, Emma was taken off the pill completely and began noticing emotional changes during her periods thereafter.

"There were days when I did not want to get out of bed, would have dark/occasionally suicidal thoughts or hesitate to leave my apartment, and when I did leave my apartment I would cry. A week later I would get my period and it was like nothing was ever wrong, and I felt perfectly happy." It wasn't until March of this year that Emma's gynecologist suspected that she was struggling with PMDD.

Emma had no knowledge of the disorder during the brunt of her symptoms, along with 84% of other PMDD sufferers surveyed by the Society for Women's Health Research. (1) Emma instead thought that her mood swings were due to out-of-hand anxiety or depression, not simply because of her period. "If women aren't aware of PMDD," she reflects, "it can lead to a misdiagnosis of anxiety or depression and they may end up being treated for something they don't actually have."

Emma's gynaecologist set up a treatment plan that includes lifestyle changes such as frequent exercise, at least three servings of fish per week along with calcium and fish oil supplements. In the six months since she made the changes, Emma has already noticed a significant improvement in her symptoms. Most importantly, though, she is aware of the source of dark moods and cloudy thoughts when they appear...they are due not to psychosis, but to her PMDD. This frees her to dismiss negative thoughts instead of considering their legitimacy, and move on with her day.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE DISORDER, CHECK OUT THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR PREMENSTRUAL DYSPHORIC DISORDER (NAPMDD.ORG) OR THE PMDD AWARENESS UK FACEBOOK GROUP (FACEBOOK.COM/PMDDAWARENESSUK), PROVIDING A COMMUNITY FOR WOMEN LIVING WITH PMDD.

National Association for Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder

Media Officer Nick Jedrzejewski gives us the background on the awareness raising organisation.

For TYCI readers who don't know about See Me, could you tell us a bit about the background of the organisation?

See Me is Scotland's national programme to end mental health discrimination. We want to change behaviour that stigmatises enabling people who experience mental health problems to live fulfilled lives.

TYCI has a large female audience, could you give us any information on issues which you have found affect this demographic more?

A study last year from Oxford University revealed that women are 40 per cent more likely to develop a mental health problem compared to men. If you add in to this that people with common mental health problems are 10 per cent less likely to be employment that other members or the public, and people with severe mental illnesses are 25 per cent less likely to be in work, you can see that discrimination is a huge issue for women. It is something that can hold them back for more than one reason. It is our right to be treated equally, but the research shows all women, including those with mental health problems are being discriminated against and it is See Me's aim to help end this.

TYCI also has a lot of younger readers. Do you have any specific programmes aimed at young people, or could you recommend any organisations they could connect with?

We are in the process of developing our children and young person's programme, in which we will target the main forms of discrimination that affects this group.

We currently have our 'What's on Your Mind?' campaign,

which started in 2012. This is targeted at young people aged 13-15. It is a resource pack, which consists of a short film and activities pack, encouraging young people to think about how their behaviour towards someone with mental health problems affects that person.

What can you tell us about your involvement with the Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival?

We partner the Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival and support the festivals aims. In practice we provide support with communications, promoting events and funding. The festival has strived for the last seven years to break down mental health stigma and challenging people's beliefs about mental illness with vibrant and exciting events.

See Me was, along with SAMH and PFA Scotland, also involved in a recent short film discussing mental health in sports, speaking to current and former players and coaches in the SPL. Why was this a project you wanted to support?

Research from the Scottish government found that half of people wouldn't want anyone to know if they had a mental health problem due to the perceived reaction. This is a form of stigma which can stop people seeking help. Footballers are icons for millions men and women in Scotland. We wanted the video to show that if they could talk about their mental health then anyone should be able to.

Additionally footballers are much more likely to face the 'what have you got to be depressed about' type of attitude which could make them reluctant to speak about a mental health problem. This video shows that mental illness could affect anyone.

What would you say are the biggest misconceptions about mental health and what can we all do to help challenge these?

Some of the biggest misconceptions include:
- that mental health problems are rare, whereas they actually affect one in four of us
- that people with mental health problems aren't able to work, whereas we all probably work with someone with a mental health problem
- that people with mental health problems are violent, and the truth is that people with mental health problems are more likely to be the victims of violence.

We would encourage people to contact See Me and join our movement to end mental health discrimination. By doing this we can all work together to target stigma and stop it.

What advice would you give to anyone who is concerned about their own mental health or that of someone they know?

See Me doesn't provide services, but if you have concerns about someone, talk to them, see how they are feeling. You can encourage them to visit their GP. If they want to talk to someone confidentially then they can call Breathing Space on 0800 83 85 87 or the Samaritans on 08457 90 90 90.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT SEEMESCOTLAND.ORG.

Remapping My Mind

Adrienne Baker writes about panic attacks.

These days, my life is all about risk management. When you live with anxiety and panic attacks, it's a skill acquired. I've got my gut on speed dial, and we talk way too much.

Ride the elevator or go out of my way to take the stairs? Travel by plane or take a trip within driving distance? Over the years, exposure to triggers, like elevators or planes has helped me overcome some of my anxiety. This is a common form of therapy. Unfortunately, exposure can also have the opposite effect, triggering an attack. It's a toss-up which route my mind will take, determined by a tiny army of contributing factors, so forgive me if I don't jump out of that plane head first.

The physical feeling of a panic attack is nothing short of debilitating. My heart pounds in my chest, sweats forms regardless of the temperature of the room, and my head feels like it might float off my neck. I always feel, with certainty, that I will surely not survive this, and everyone knows I'm going down. Ironically, when I've described my moments of terror to those around me, most of the time, they had no idea. How strange that is, to think that what's going on in my mind, and subsequently with my body is so consuming, yet is completely undetected by those around me. No wonder it's so easy to keep what you're struggling with inside. Who would have any idea if you didn't say anything?

To those around me, the act of avoiding triggers might make me look scared or weak, or even just boring; no fun. When friends or family lose confidence in you, it's easy to start to lose it in yourself. Sometimes even their comments of surprise when I decide to take a risk are hard to hear. "You'd fly to Europe? I thought you'd never get on a flight that long!" The internal struggle ensues:

"Maybe I am just a weak person?"

"If I miss out on this opportunity, will I regret that I didn't take the risk?"

"But I am brave sometimes! Spontaneous, even!"

I'm surrounded by people who love me unconditionally. So, I'm still unsure of why it's so important for me to prove my strength to my friends and family.

When I am able to face a trigger, it feels like a massive victory. But, fail to, and it feels like an even more massive loss. Some days I think, "Today is the day I will not back away." Other days, I feel that the physical weight of an attack might bury me. Sometimes I forget that I once spent 45 minutes with my head in an MRI machine without panicking. Or that I've stood in front of hundreds of people in support of my friends and family at their wedding ceremonies, without running for the hills.

I recently went horseback riding. The idea was mine, and even though my mind filled with thoughts of the worst case scenario, of injury, or even looking odd if I backed out at the last moment, I did it anyway. I faced an experience that could have easily pulled me into the familiar and all-consuming panic, and it was indeed a victory. No one knew I was doing something big. No one knew I was jumping out of the plane head first. But I did, and this victory was for me. I felt strong at the end of the

ride. I could see hundreds of acres of land, as we made our way back to the stables, putting all of my trust in the massive animal carrying me. The rhythm of the horse's walk was so peaceful and the breeze was perfect. That was my trophy; my reward for taking a risk. The victories are so worth it.

Here is why the stigma of mental illness has to end. Confidence alone won't rid someone of anxiety or panic attacks, and we have a long way to go before all people with mental illness are given the care they need through the right laws and regulation, but when society is accepting of those with mental illness, self worth can grow. Confidence allows us to take a risk, knowing we may or may not come away better than we were before. Confidence allows us to come to you and say, "I need help", when we feel like we can't do it alone. Don't write us off. We need space to try new things, or not try new things, but know that we are accepted either way.

FOR MORE OF ADRIENNE'S WRITING, FOLLOW HER ON TWITTER (@ ADRIENNEBUZZ).

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The latest episode of the TYCI podcast is online now and can be found at soundcloud.com/tyciblog. Our next Subcity show will be Thursday 9 November, 5 - 7pm. Tune in at subcity.org/shows/tyci.

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We have a website where we write about things which affect us and put together features on art, theatre, music, film, politics, current affairs and most things in between. We also talk about similar stuff on our monthly podcasts and radio show on Subcity.

This zine is a collection of some of the content from our site and is distributed in conjunction with our monthly live events.

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